

**10<sup>th</sup> World Congress International Critical Incident Stress Foundation**  
**25 February – 01 March 2009**

Submitted by: Melissa Salsgiver

Pittsburgh District Peer Supporter

Great Lakes and Ohio River Subject Matter Expert

Assistant Program Manager USACE Critical Incident Stress Management Team

1. The 10th World Congress of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) was held in Baltimore, MD, 25 February -01 March 2009. The USACE Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team was represented by Co-Program Manager Mark Roderick, MVD and Assistant Program Manager Melissa Salsgiver, LRD.

2. ICISF is active in 28 nations. Attending the World Congress were 741 attendees representing 19 countries, 47 of the United States of America including Washington, DC and Guam. There were over 100 volunteers serving in various capacities from registration, logistics, door monitors, presenter aides, A/V specialists, poster presentations and vendor support. The Baltimore City Fire Department Honor Guard, along with drummers and pipers, presented the colors to formally open the event. They also staffed an information desk and served as Baltimore Ambassadors to the World Congress participants.

3. Following are the workshop sessions attended by Salsgiver including a brief synopsis and/or learning objectives:

- ✓ Crisis Support Team Development: Best Practices by Patricia L. Tritt, RN MS. Described steps and considerations in developing a new team including a selection of new team members. Addressed successful team leadership, team dynamics, common mistakes and how to insure continued health and longevity of team.
- ✓ The Bulletproof Mind by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman. Described stress inoculation and how it can limit and prevent undesired physiological effects. Presented the physiological effects of combat and military violence enabling techniques. Covered the prevention, response and survival in the face of a new kind of domestic and international terrorism, and application of physiological effects upon humans faced with close range interpersonal aggression. Also covered a breathing technique and the effects of heart rate, sleep deprivation and perceptual distortions in aggressive situations. Discussed PTSD and how to avoid it.
- ✓ When Cultures Differ: Blending Crisis Interventions with Cultural Traditions by Patty R. Stewart McCord, B.G.S. Identified cultural and spiritual issues in a community and the impacts on disaster response team approaches. Identified community strengths and factors that can promote healing for those affected by a traumatic event. Discussed how to best blend ICISF models within a cultural setting.
- ✓ Creating Individual and Team Resiliency by Angie Panos, PhD and Cameron J. March, Major, MBE. Related current findings in the field of psychological resiliency that relate

to trauma workers' health and longevity in their careers. Defined methods and skills individuals can use to develop their own psychological resiliency. Demonstrated methods to strengthen teams to better cope with stress and prevent compassion fatigue.

- ✓ CISM –Psychological Injury Risk Management by Monica Kleinman, Med, MAPS. Presented the historical development of New South Wales CISM program and shared strategies for organizational change. Discussed participants' organizational challenges and provided insight into the importance of inter-agency collaboration and cooperation.
- ✓ Spiritual Survival in Law Enforcement by Michael A. Shochet, Cantor, MSM. Described effects of stress and burnout on law enforcement personnel and how those effects may present issues of the spirit and challenge one's personal beliefs.

4. Plenary sessions were of a general interest and open to all World Congress participants. Following is a topic listing of those attended by Salsgiver.

- ✓ The Importance of Crisis Training for Your Community and For the World
- ✓ Psychological Services in the Disaster Context – Sichuan Earthquake
- ✓ ICISF Humanitarian Trip to China – Sichuan Earthquake
- ✓ The Northern Illinois University Response to the 2/14 Shooting
- ✓ The Use of ICISF Crisis Intervention Models in Hostage Takings or Other Crisis
- ✓ Non Traditional First Responders and Volunteers: Their Unique CISM Needs
- ✓ An Evaluation of CISM with the Irish Defense Forces on UN Duty Liberia
- ✓ Resilience: The Final Frontier

5. The Friday evening plenary session consisted of a military symposium moderated by Lt. Col. Charles E. Woods, MA, MDiv. It included 4 presentations of specific interest to the armed forces, those that work with the military community or those have an interest in traumatic stress. The four presentation topics attended by Salsgiver were:

- ✓ Research and Application of Battlemind Psychological Debriefing (modification of CISD) by Dennis McGurk, PhD, MAJ Christopher Warner, MD
- ✓ PTSD...Always What It Seems? By Martin P. Deahl, FRCPsych
- ✓ Importance of Recognizing Traumatic Brain Injury during Disaster by COL Hermant K. Thakur, MD
- ✓ Returning Home from War: the Beginning of Reintegration at Fort Dix, NJ by David H. Forden, MDiv.

6. Salsgiver also attended the CISM Coordinators' meeting. This was primarily a recap of the 2008 Coordinators' meeting and discussion of upcoming meeting. It will be held in Cleveland, Ohio in 2010. The CISM Coordinator meetings are held every other year, in the year World Congress is not convened.

7. The ICISF very professionally presented this 10th World Congress. The sessions were led by obvious subject matter experts with a wide variety of topics from which to select. Certifications based upon contact hours were available. Certificates of participation were issued after the Pre-Congress sessions with Main Congress certificates being mailed.

8. Recommendations:

- ✓ The World Congress is a valuable tool to learn new skills, update information and network within the CISM community. Based upon topics covered in workshops, sessions and plenary sessions, the recommended number of USACE CISM peer supporters would vary with each World Congress. The next World Congress is scheduled for 2011 in Baltimore, MD. USACE program managers should begin early planning to best capitalize on this unique and valuable experience.
- ✓ The next Coordinators' meeting is slated for 2010. At a minimum, one of the CISM Program Managers should attend to determine the application of this meeting to the Corps of Engineers' program and make recommendation as to future participation.

Respectively submitted,  
Melissa Salsgiver